

D1373

Gift of Charles T. Jenkins

A

PLAIN REFUTATION

OF THAT

FALSE AND INJURIOUS DOCTRINE,

SO PREVALENT IN THE WORLD,

WHICH PRESENTS

GOD AS THE AUTHOR OF ALL SIN,

OR,

THAT HE HATH DECREED FROM ALL ETERNITY
WHATSOEVER COMES TO PASS.

WRITTEN BY WAY OF
QUERIES, ON SCRIPTURE PASSAGES,
IN 1704.

BY JANE FEARON.

'Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear
' my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will
' sup with him, and he with me.'

'And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that
' heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come:
' and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely.'

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That which is chiefly aimed at in proposing these following QUERIES, is, 1st, to assert the honor and glory of the Holy Omnipotent GOD; who was by himself proclaimed 'The Lord, the Lord GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.' Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. But whether it be to honor GOD, by the presenting him as the Author of all the sin and iniquity of all kinds that have been committed since the foundation of the world, I leave to the unprejudiced reader to judge: For if GOD hath decreed whatever cometh to pass, as this doctrine suggests, how can it be otherwise?

2dly, To manifest my duty and love to my neighbors, hoping it will be readily granted, we are not under the law, but under grace; according as it is written, 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' John i. 17. and therefore ought to come further than the Levitical law, wherein it was written, 'Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray,' &c. Deut. xxii. 1. But how much is a man better than an ox or sheep, seeing the soul of man is immortal, and must either be capable of joy and felicity, or woe and misery, world without end? And therefore I dare not sew pillows under the arm-holes of any, nor deal with flattery, nor fear the frowns of such as I am engaged with; knowing if I strive to please men, I shall not be the servant of Christ.

3dly, To clear my own soul of the blood of such, by giving them warning, according to the saying of the Lord to the prophet, 'If thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.' Ezek. xxxiii. 9.

When I undertook to write, I did intend brevity, but could not compose it so short as I desired, and be intelligible in the matter; but if the reader do but seriously consider the greatest part is Scripture, and worthy to be observed, and which we ought to have a reverend esteem of, in general, but more especially of that which was spoken by GOD, and our Lord Jesus Christ, with the sayings of the prophets; and the doctrine of the apostles, who understood the mind of Christ; and as in seriousness it is read, and prejudice kept out, so it may be of benefit: Which is the sincere desire of a lover of the souls of all men.

JANE FEARON.

Queries.

1. SEEING God was pleased in the beginning to create Adam in the likeness of himself, and place him in the garden of Eden, in a state of innocency, holiness, purity, and wisdom, that he could give names to all cattle, and to the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field, according to their natures; and God saw all that he had made was very good, and he gave mankind dominion over the works of his hands; as the Psalmist, speaking of the dignity wherein man was placed, in the admiration of God's great goodness to man, saith, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet,' Psalm viii. 5, 6.'—Now, whether was Adam's loss and fall, by reason of God's absolute decree from eternity, or by reason of his own transgression? If it should be said, By reason of God's absolute decree; how doth it contradict God's sentence pronounced upon him, Gen. iii. 17. 'Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it?'

Query 2. Whether Cain had not a day of visitation given him of God, and conditionally acceptance with him? According to that saying by the Lord unto him, 'Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, thou shalt be accepted, (look in the old translation) but if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door.' Gen. iv. 6, 7.—Now if we say, the acceptance is by an eternal absolute decree, and not in the well doing,

is not this to contradict God himself, and consequently no less than blasphemy?

Query 3. Whether Esau was rejected by an eternal absolute decree, before he sold his birth-right? Seeing the apostle saith, 'For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Heb. xii. 17.—Now perhaps I shall here meet with an objection, because it was said unto Rebecca, 'The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,' Rom. ix. 12, 13.—But why Esau was hated, read Obadiah, the first chapter, and 10th verse. 'For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever.' That sentence, 'Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,' was written by Malachi, long after this time; but that which was spoken of them before they were born, was, 'the elder shall serve the younger;' which sentence may also be taken allegorically, relating to the first and second birth spoken of to Nicodemus by our blessed Lord, John iii. 5. viz. 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' and seeing Christ our Lord layeth the whole stress of entering into the kingdom of God, upon being born again *of the second birth*, well might it be said, 'The elder shall serve the younger,' or the first nature give way to the second; seeing that by the former 'we are all children of wrath,' as the apostle saith, 'even as others,' Eph. ii. 3. So while mankind remaineth in this, he is in the state of reprobation; but when the first nature or birth giveth place to the second, and mankind comes to be born again of that seed that is 'incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and

abideth forever,' 1 Peter i. 23. he is in a state of election, and loved of God, which answers to that sentence, 'Jacob have I loved,' &c. And likewise as the apostle speaketh concerning Ishmael and Isaac, which things, saith he, are an allegory, for these are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai, which gendreth to bondage, which is Agar, &c. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all, Gal. iv. 24, 26. Which also relates to the second birth, and what we should all be born of, if the children of election or promise; but as the apostle said, 'As then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now, nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman,' verse 29, 30. Which is as much as to say, The first nature in which we are children of wrath, cannot be heir of the kingdom of God; but such as know the second to have dominion, which is that freedom and liberty, the same apostle exhorteth the Galatians stand fast in, saying, wherewith here 'Christ hath made us free,' Gal. v. 1.—Perhaps I may also meet with an objection, because it was said unto Pharaoh, 'For this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth,' Exod. ix. 16. But wherefore it was so said, may be seen in Exodus iii. 7, 8, 9. viz. 'And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them;' and Moses and Aaron were sent unto Pharaoh, to declare

God's mind concerning his people ; but when he would not hearken unto them, but said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go,' Exod. v. 2. When he would not hearken to the Lord nor obey his voice, then his heart was hardened, as the Lord said, 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart,' which is the future tense, or the time which is to come, and therefore not from eternity.

Query 4. Whether was it by an eternal absolute decree, that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed ? Seeing the Lord said, 'Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it,' &c. Gen. xviii. 20, 21. And although he found their sin grievous, yet through Abraham's intercession he would have spared Sodom, with its inhabitants, if there had been but ten righteous persons in it ; and surely if there had been any absolute decree from eternity for their destruction, God would have made it known to Abraham, and when he so reverently interceded for them, would rather have told him, I have decreed their destruction, than so far have condescended to him, till it came to the number of ten righteous persons ; seeing the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham, that thing which I do ?' Gen. xviii. 17.

Query 5. Why should the Lord give his people conditional acceptance with him, as may be understood by calling unto Moses out of the mountain, saying, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you as on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself ; now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and

keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me?' Exod. xix. 3. 4, 5. So they entered into covenant with the Lord, and said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do,' verse 8. Notwithstanding they rebelled against him, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and therefore whether was it by an eternal absolute decree; or because of their rebellion? If so, how by this doctrine do they make God the greatest of dissemblers, viz. To make a covenant with his people, concerning that which he made impossible for them to have the benefit of?

Query 6. Whether Corah, Dathan, and Abiram's destruction, was because of their rebellion, or because it was absolutely decreed from eternity? If it should be said, Because it was absolutely decreed from eternity; how doth that contradict Moses, who said, 'If these men die the common death of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me: but if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertain to them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord,' Num. xvi. 29, 30. which they could not do from eternity, before they had a being.

Query 7. Wherefore should Moses say to the children of Israel, 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and cleave unto him.' Deut. xxx. 19, 20. Now we see upon such and such conditions, they might have had life, and the blessing; otherwise death, and the curse was to be their portion. Why should Moses say, 'Choose life,' if it had been impossible for them to choose

it, and if their destruction had been absolutely decreed from eternity, it would have been impossible, according to this doctrine.

Query 8. Moreover when Moses had told them what curses should befall them, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, as may be read at large in Deut. 29th chapter; so that the nations should say, 'Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers,' &c.—verse 24, 25. But if it was absolutely decreed from eternity, might it not rather be said, it was no desert of theirs, they could no way avoid it; God's absolute decree from eternity brought it upon them; see how by this doctrine man's destruction is laid upon God, contrary to the saying of the Lord by the prophet, viz. 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.' Hosea xiii. 9.

Query 9. Why should Joshua, when he was near to draw his last breath, thus direct his speech to the children of Israel, and say, 'Behold this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God hath spoken concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof; therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he hath destroyed you.' Josh. xxiii. 14, 15.

The first was upon condition that they took good heed to themselves, and that they loved the Lord their God; and the latter when they transgressed the covenant of the Lord their God, and served

other gods ; Joshua, although filled with the Spirit of wisdom and courage, and had such access to the throne of God, as at his request the sun stood still for the space of a whole day, he did not tell the children of Israel, first, That it was because they were of the number of God's elect, from all eternity, surely if it had been so, God would have made it known to him, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things ; and secondly, that they were not of the elect, but of that number that were under eternal reprobation, that all the evil things should come upon them; for according to this doctrine, they must be one while this, and another that, unless they would deny Joshua's dying words; who told the people how they might chuse the good and reject the evil, but if it was impossible by God's absolute decree, to chuse good, &c. then Joshua's exhortation was in vain.

Query 10. Why should Deborah thus say in her song, 'Curse ye Meroz (said the angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, against the mighty,' Judges v. 23. if it was so decreed that they could not? Was it not hard measure to be so bitterly cursed, for not doing that which was impossible? And according to this doctrine it was so.

Query 11. What was the reason that Hannah should thus say, 'The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed?' 1 Sam. ii. 3. And doth not rather say, He taketh no notice of the actions of mankind, whether good or bad? For according to this doctrine it cannot be otherwise. And how doth this also lead into a dissolute life, void of true fear, or drawn into despair? I have seen the man that was under exercise of mind for the good of his soul, and amongst others he went

to hear sermons, and he heard one hold forth for doctrine, 'That, such as belong to the election of grace, should be pluckt as a brand out of the fire, or as with a threefold cord;' believing such doctrine, he run into a dissolute life; and one took notice of it to be worse than before, and spake to him concerning it; and told him of the time when it was better with him; and his reply was, 'If God will have me, let him fetch me with a threefold cord;' in as much as there was no need for him to be concerned, and if he should, it would be to no purpose;—now whether the doctrine of this preacher did not some way occasion the poor man's dissoluteness and desperate resolution, deserves to be considered.

Query 12. Is not this doctrine of absolute reprobation, contrary to the message that the man of God came with to old Eli, in the name of the Lord? 1 Samuel ii. 30. 'For them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.'

Query 13. Wherefore should David say, 'The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands, hath he recompensed me?' 2 Sam. xxii. 1. And doth not rather say, Because of God's absolute decree from eternity he hath rewarded me?

Query 14. Now if there had been such a decree, why should David so command his son Solomon to keep 'the charge of the Lord his God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and his commandments, &c. that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, if thy children take heed to their way to walk before me in truth, with all their heart, and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel?' 1 Kings ii. 3, 4. May we not see here

that the Lord promised it upon condition, but the condition was not observed ; so whether must the fault have been, on God's part or man's, if there was such an absolute decree before man had a being, that he should transgress? By this is not God made the author of man's transgression, and what less can that be than blasphemy?

Query 15. And whether was Ahab's destruction pronounced upon him, 1 Kings xxi. by reason of the eternal decree, or because he had so highly provoked the Lord, in the matter of Naboth? If it should be said, because God had decreed he should do so wickedly, that he might destroy him; how doth this doctrine make God the author of Naboth's murder; and not only Naboth's, but of all the murder and bloodshed from Abel? Wherefore must Ahab be punished, for that he could no way avoid? Oh! my soul, come not thou into their secret, neither take hold of their paths, who teach such doctrine.

Query 16. Now if there had been such an absolute decree from eternity, why would David have expressed himself on this wise; 'And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Now if the acceptance was by the decree before mentioned, what need was there for David so to command his son, and plainly shew upon what conditions God would be found of him?

Query 17. If there had been such an absolute decree, why did the Spirit of God come upon Azariah; so that he went out to meet Asa, and said

unto him, 'Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you?' 2 Chro. xv. 1, 2. Now whether is man's destruction by an eternal absolute decree, or for want of seeking the Lord, seeing he will be found of those that seek him? And likewise did not Ezra confirm it in these words, 'The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him?' And said he, 'So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he was entreated of us.' Ezra viii. 22, 23. Now if it had been absolutely decreed from eternity, what need of so much fasting and seeking God? And also Nehemiah said on this wise unto the Lord, 'Remember, I beseech thee, the word thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations; but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them, tho' there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them into the place that I have chosen to set my name there.' Neh. i. 8, 9. May not we see that there are always conditions required, which, if observed, men are accepted of God; and if not observed, they are rejected? Where is then the absolute decree?

Query 18. Whether that decree the Psalmist spoke of, doth not signify God's universal love to mankind? viz. 'I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Psal. ii. 7, 8. Now if the heathen are given for an inheritance,

and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, to the Son of God. Where is then the number that is absolutely decreed from eternity for damnation?

Query 19. Whether the saying of the wise man doth not signify God's universal love to mankind? viz. 'Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the city she uttereth her words, saying, how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.' Prov. i. 20, 21, 22, 23. Now if the simple, and the scorner, and the fools, upon condition of turning at the voice of wisdom, had the promise of the pouring forth of the Spirit, which undoubtedly was able to work a change in their hearts, according to the saying of the prophet, 'when the Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, the wilderness shall become a fruitful field, &c. Isai. xxxii. 15. Where is then the number that is absolutely decreed from eternity for damnation? But if it should be objected, although wisdom did cry to the very worst of men, as it appears; yet such as were absolutely predestinated to damnation, could not turn at her reproof; would not this render God a hard master, and also a mocker of such as wisdom called to, as first to make it impossible by his absolute decree, and then call to them to do that which he had made impossible?

Query 20. Why should the wise man say, 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work in-

to judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil?' Eccles. xii. 13, 14. For if God by his absolute decree has made it impossible for the greatest part of mankind to fear him, and keep his commandments, and yet will bring every work to judgment, whether good or evil, would not this also render him unmerciful; to bring such under judgment from doing evil, to whom he made it impossible to do good, or to fear him, and keep his commandments?

Query 21. And again, do not the words of the prophet Isaiah prove God's universal love to mankind? viz. 'It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.' Isai. xlix. 6. And if Christ is for salvation to the ends of the earth; as Isaiah saith in another place, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, &c. Isai. xlv. 22. Where is the number that is absolutely decreed from eternity for damnation?

Query 22. If it had been absolutely decreed from eternity, wherefore should the prophet Jeremiah be commanded by the Lord, to proclaim the desolation of the Jews for their sins, and say, 'Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle; because they have forsaken me, (but not because of an absolute decree from eternity) and filled this place with the blood of innocents; they have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire, for burnt-offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into

my mind.' Jere. xix. 3, 4, 5. Now by this doth it not appear, that God ever decreed the burning of their sons, although it came to pass : but according to this absolute predestinarian doctrine, how is God made guilty of the blood of these poor innocents, notwithstanding he had declared by his prophet, he commanded it not, nor spake it, neither came it into his mind ?

Query 23. Moreover, how is that saying of the prophet Ezekiel, contradictory to that doctrine of absolute reprobation ? viz. 'Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Now is there any thing more certain than that God liveth ? And therefore will it not follow, so certain it is that he delighteth not in the death of the wicked ?

Query 24. Furthermore, whether God, who is long-suffering, gracious, slow to anger, and full of mercy, is not rendered by this doctrine less merciful than Nebuchadnezzar ? who although he cast the servants of the most high God into the fire, yet he commanded them first to be brought before him, and said unto them, 'Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ? Do ye not serve my Gods, nor worship the golden image, which I have set up ? Now if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image, which I have made, well ; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace,' &c. Dan. iii. 14, 15. Here we may see he made inquiry at their own mouths, whether the report he had heard of them was true, yea, or nay ; and then offered them conditions, whereby they

might escape the casting into the burning fiery furnace ; whereas man hath no additions offered him, according to this doctrine, in order to his escaping eternal misery, but must be forever tormented, for not doing that which he was never able to do ?

Query 25. Why should the prophet Hosea say, 'Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, in the land,' Hosea iv. 1. If God had absolutely decreed (it) from eternity that it should be so, wherefore should his controversy be with them, if they could not do what he required of them ?

Query 26. And again, why did the prophet Joel say, 'Rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness,' &c. Joel i. 13. For if they were not in a capacity to turn unto the Lord, the prophet's exhortation was in vain.

Query 27. What was the reason the prophet Amos said to the children of Israel, seek the Lord and ye shall live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel, Amos v. 6. if it was absolutely decreed, that they could not seek him, that they might live ?

Query 28. Why did the Lord threaten Esau, saying, 'For the violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever, if that had not been the cause ? As may be seen in Obadiah, verse 10.

Query 29. Why should Jonah give this as a reason for his fleeing to Tarshish, when he should have gone to Nineveh, which God spared upon re-

pentance, saying to the Lord, 'I knew that thou art a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil, John iv. 1. if man must be punished by an absolute decree from eternity; before he had a being, or could sin against the Lord?

Query 30. Wherefore did the prophet say, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Micah vi. 8. If it were impossible for the greatest part of mankind to attain unto this? Why should God require it, if he had not put man in a capacity of doing it? Should we not account it injustice even in men if they should command us to do that, which they know we have no power to perform?

Query 31. Furthermore why should the prophet say, 'The Lord is slow to anger (if it were not so) and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked,' Nah. i. 3. If he hath no regard to the doings of mankind, as according to this doctrine, he hath not, but only to his own absolute decree from eternity?

Query 32. Moreover why did the prophet Habakkuk say, 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer, when I am reprov'd,' Hab. ii. 1. And not rather say, if I be one that is predestinated to life, I need do nothing but what I please, be it good or bad, it cannot alter God's absolute decree; and if I be of that number that is for damnation; let my diligence and seeking be what it will, it will avail me nothing?

Query 33. Why was it said, 'It shall come to pass, at the time that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their

tees, that say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil; therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation, and I will bring distress upon men, because they have sinned against the Lord, and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung, neither their silver, nor their gold, shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.' Zeph. i. 12, 13, 17, 18. Was it not because they had sinned against the Lord, that this distress was to come upon them? Therefore where is the absolute decree?

Query 34. Wherefore did the prophet Haggai call God's people to consider, what circumstances they were under, and say, 'Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but have not enough; ye drink, but are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house, that is waste.' Hag. i. 6, 9. Was it God's decree that his house should lie waste, that his people might be punished? For according to this predestinarian doctrine, hath not God decreed, whatever cometh to pass?

Query 35. Why did the angel of the Lord say unto Joshua, 'Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by?' Zech. iii. 7. May we not see that it was upon condition, that Joshua was to be accepted of God, and to have such a great place; as to judge his house? But if acceptance had been by an absolute decree, might not Joshua have had it forever, without any conditions?

Query 36. What was the reason that the prophet Zechariah, exhorted God's people in the name of the Lord, saying, 'Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother, and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, nor the stranger, nor the poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart: But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, &c. Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts.' Zech. vii. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Now if it was because that they obeyed not the voice of the Lord, by the prophet, that the great wrath came upon them, as is before expressed; then it was not because of any absolute decree, for God is more righteous, more merciful, and more just, than to bring wrath upon men, for that which they could in no wise avoid; and if it was absolutely decreed from eternity, how could they shun it?

Query 37. Moreover why did the prophet Malachi say, 'Now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you: if ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.' Mal. ii. 1, 2. Now whether they were cursed, because they did not give glory to the Lord's name, nor let it take impression upon them, that they might keep his covenant? Or because of an absolute decree, from eternity? If any say by an abso-

late decree, do not they contradict God himself, and the prophet, who spake in the name of the Lord?

Query 38. Doth not this predestinarian doctrine make the coming of Christ void, and his prayers, sermons and exhortations ineffectual to a great part of mankind? For if men be of the number that is elected absolutely to salvation; what need have they to regard any of these, but go on in what the flesh most delights in; but if they are predestinated to damnation, it is neither Christ's coming, sermons, or prayer, death, resurrection, or ascension, will do them any good; for according to the doctrine of absolute predestination, the decree must stand, whether for salvation or damnation.

Query 39. Whether the man that came to Jesus, and asked him, 'Good master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life, Mark x. 17. was hindered because of God's absolute decree, or because he did not observe the conditions, upon which Christ promised it to him, viz. 'By selling what he had, and giving it to the poor, and taking up his cross and following Christ? If we say by an absolute decree, do not we pervert Christ's words, who told him (viz. the man) that he might have treasure in heaven, if he observed the conditions aforesaid?

Query 40. Why did the angel declare the birth and coming of Christ, to the shepherds? Luke ii. 10. 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,' &c. And why did old Simeon likewise confirm it, when the Holy Ghost was upon him, and 'he came by the Spirit into the temple,' verse 25, 27, with these words, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and

the glory of thy people Israel.' Verse 29, 30, 31, 32. If God had shut out the greatest part of mankind by an absolute decree from eternity, from receiving any advantage thereby ; how are they good tidings of great joy to such, who are barred the benefit by the aforesaid decree ?

Query 41. Why should Jesus declare of the great love of God, as in John iii. 16, 17, 18. and say, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life ; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved ; he that believeth on him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' If the doctrine of absolute predestination be true ; for here we may see condemnation is pronounced by our Lord, because of men's unbelief ; Christ doth not say, God's absolute decree from eternity hath made it impossible for the greatest part of mankind, to have everlasting life, but they that believe not on him, whom God had sent ; but if we should say God's decree hath made it impossible ; will it not be a direct contradicting of Christ ?

Query 42. Do not we read also in Acts x. 34, 35. that Peter spoke expressly concerning acceptance with God, upon conditions, when he said, 'Of a truth I perceive God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him ? And then where is the decree that can hinder man from acceptance with God, if he fear him, and work righteousness ?

Query 43. Why should the apostle Paul say to the Romans, 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,' Rom. v. 18. if there had been an absolute decree from eternity to the contrary? But the apostle speaketh very plainly, that the free gift came upon all; and what is more free than that which is come upon all? And therefore where is the absolute decree to the contrary?

Query 44. Why should the apostle say, 1 Cor. xv. 22. 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive?' And if Christ died for all that were dead in Adam, then where is the number decreed for damnation, or that have not the offer of salvation by Christ?

Query 45. Why should the apostle say, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;' if he had believed there was no possibility of salvation for the greater part of mankind? For according to this predestinarian doctrine, it doth appear there was not; therefore to what purpose was it, or is it, to persuade any? For they who are elected to salvation by this absolute decree, stand in need of no persuasion; and those that are predestinated to damnation, it will do them no good; so according to this doctrine, the apostle's labour seems to be in vain.

Query 46. Moreover why should the apostle be so fervent to preach the word of God, Colos. i. 28. saying, 'Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' if God

had made salvation impossible to the greater part of mankind, by an absolute decree from eternity

Query 47. Furthermore, why should the apostle Paul say, 1 Timothy ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. 'I exhort therefore that supplications, prayers, be made for all men;' but that he affirmed it to be 'good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth?' Where then is the absolute decree?

Query 48. Why did the apostle Peter say, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness) but long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;' 2 Pet. iii. 9. if there had been an absolute decree from eternity, of predestinating some to damnation, as according to this doctrine, some are so predestinated? Now, whether the apostle did speak truth, yea, or nay, who plainly declared that it is not God's will, 'That any should perish, but that all should come to repentance?' Therefore consider what kind of doctrine that is, which giveth God and Christ the contradiction, as well as the holy prophets and apostles; openeth a door of carelessness and security to some, and maketh the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the gospel wholly useless and ineffectual to others. O that the vail of ignorance and blindness, that is upon the minds of the maintainers of this doctrine, were taken off, that they might come to see the glory of the pure evangelical doctrine and ministry, wherein the love of God is held forth to all the sons and daughters of men, upon their repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Who tasted death for every man.' Heb. ii. 9.

And 'Is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' 1 John ii. 2. The *Light*, the *Way*, the *Truth*, the *Life*, and besides whom, *there is no Savior*.



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A Paper concerning such as are made Ministers by the will of man, and an
Exhortation to all sober minded people to come out from among them.

What ministry is that which is upheld by a Law given forth in man, will con-
trary to the Law of God, if it be not Antichristian? and whether or no their
Ministry was from God that haled out of the Synagogues, or those that were
haled? And whether Paul's Ministry was not according to what you now perse-
cute, who went into the Synagogues to reason with them, after the same man-
ner as we doe now, vvhoe received not his Ministry from man, neither had
it by man, though he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliell, he counted that
which he learned there, as dung and drosse, in comparison of the excellency of
Jesus Christ; and now with the same light, your form of prayer, and form of
preaching without the power, it is as drosse and dung to me, and to all that live
in the life, who know Christ to be the high Priest over the household of God,
whose Government is on his shoulders, who will not acquit the wicked, neither
shall the evill doer escape his hand; for the hand of the Lord is stretched out, and
by the baring of his arme are we Saved from all our transgressions, which
by no other means could be done; for when I wallowing in my blood, and my
eye pirtied me, nor none could cure my disease, when I went through the vale
of misery, in the cloudy and dark day, when no light appeared, then was I fol-
lowing men, but darkness was over the whole earth in me, which was my great
sorrow, but sometimes hope was an anchor, that it should not be alwaies so, but
when the flood came I was as one overwhelmed with sorrow, for all my aching,
and my prayers returned in vain; while I was aching for life, the living suffe-
red in me, which groaned for deliverance, and the groans of that was heard, and
not my prayers, then the Son of Righteousness appeared to me, with healing
under his wings, then he rent the vail, and uncovered all that I had done, and
shewed me the book wherein all my actions were set down, that I had acted a-
gainst him ever since I was a childe, and indeed I could read in it, and knew
what was written there, then was the acceptable yeer of the Lord God, and the
day of vengeance to the ungodly in me, then was the vials of the wrath of God
powred forth upon me without mixture, and indeed it was given me to drink deep-
ly but I desired that I might be spared, but it was to let me see that I had Sinned
against God, and I should bear his indignation, untill he did plead my cause,
for I was condemned, but the Blood of the Son of God ransomed me and
brought me into freedom, which by no other meanes could be done; then he
shewed me his doctrine, and writ his Law in me, and placed his word in my heart,
which is an everlasting witness for himself, and against all the world, that their
deeds are evil, who by his power hath shaken, and caused all my bones to trem-
ble, and to stagger like a drunken man, but the remainder of himself could not
be Shaken, for he was stricken, and by his stripes were we healed, and by his light
we see all hirelings, and persecutors to be out of his doctrine; therefore we de-
stroy them; So all people who fear God come out from among them (least you
be partakers of their plagues) as I have done. M. F.

The Difference between the worlds relation which stands in strife, malice and
wickednesse, and the Saints relation which stands in love, life, peace and joy in
the Holy ghost

The Relation which stands in destroying, is by the children of the light denied,
all such who live out of light, and out of it walke, who wear the old garment,
whose minde is corrupt, and hath a wisdom; and with it know not God, and
hath